

2020 International Screenwriters' Association Feedback

TITLE: "SAFE AT HOME"

GENRE: Thriller

WRITER: Gary Cifra

OVERALL

Safe at Home is a compelling script that demonstrates the writer's ability to provide for the genre. There are some strong dramatic moments that resonate well on the page. We also appreciate the depth of character. The characters here are well-crafted.

We like the dynamic between Drew and Mary and especially between Mary and Ava. Something here really pops. These two really read well together on the page. For the most part, direction is also quite good. The writer is concise and smart with words. Descriptors are well chosen and used sparingly, allowing the reader to better engage his or her imagination. The writer doesn't make effort to oversell or over explain plot through prose or dialogue. The story simply makes for a comfortable read, one that capably brings the writer's vision to the page.

From the perspective of format, the writer is well versed. The script has a polished look and feel. As well, the writer keeps typos to an absolute minimum which assures us that the writer is both a capable professional and someone who has an overall respect for industry standards. It is a genuine pleasure to read a script that is this well cared for.

CONCEPT

Conceptually speaking, the writer has a hold of something here. Early on, after the assault, there was some good tension on the page as Drew tried to figure out the whys and whos of the case. A proper mystery was at hand and there were but a few suspects. And yet, there was the feeling of some coming twist, so we found ourselves trying to outthink the story as it progressed. This is always a good sign. Lee, it seemed, was a somewhat easy guess but not our first. As well, the writer did a decent job of throwing us off of Lee's scent.

We appreciate how the writer pushes us through this mystery. We get a real sense of the building tension, especially when Drew finally confronts Lee in his house as the second assault is underway. This is a good scene. The initial assault on Mary reads well because of trauma and issues that follow are well represented. The mending process can be a very serious struggle for many. The writer does a nice job of showing us a Mary who is deeply wounded and then healing and then healed. This is a solid message because it resonates and would resonate with victims of sexual assault. Though the wound

will never go away, there is still plenty of life and happiness ahead. Mary's ability to reach beyond and make better decisions for herself firmly establishes this.

STRUCTURE

The writer does a good job of providing for structure. The acts each openly support one another, and the result is a story that is well-paced and progresses naturally, without any hindrances to slow or disrupt it. With the script underway, the writer gives us a quick suggestion of the coming assault before pulling back three days. We then pick up on this scene later in the act.

As the second act is underway, we get a real sense of building tension, a proper whodunnit. The dream sequence that ends on page 52 is solid. This is a very odd dream as dreams tend to be, so it reads as authentic.

We love the ending. Mary packs her bags and takes off for Venice. Her choice to be with Ava reads as a solid choice, natural.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

These characters read quite well. The writer does a nice job of providing each with a proper sense of purpose and identity. Character arcs are established early and effectively.

Drew makes for a solid protagonist. We appreciate how the writer layers his struggles. There are problems at home, problems at work. It seems a mile a minute every day with him. He reads as very relatable but, of course, for this need of his to draw out this unusual revenge scheme.

Mary is solid. There is something quirky about her but in a fun way. She reads as relatable but also comes across as more than a bit unpredictable. We like this about her and, as a result, it makes perfect sense that she reacts to Ava the way she does.

Speaking of which, we loved Ava. Here is a colorful, fun, lively woman who has dealt with the pains of her past and moved on. She reads as a perfect connection for Mary who is clearly dealing with her fresh wounds. As a result, these two really come across very well on the page. There is a palpable chemistry that easily leads us to the final scene. Nicely done with this one.

PAGE WORK/VOICE

The writer has a good voice for the genre. There are some

nice choices here that provide for some real depth, drama. This was noted early on in the scenes building up to the assault and then with the scenes that quickly followed.

The format is good. Almost no typos.

SUMMARY

Safe at Home has some potential. We really appreciate the depth of these characters and how they arc. The drama works and the mystery behind the assault gets our attention quickly. The writer provides for an easy pace and the pages easily turn.

Thank you for the opportunity to read this strong and compelling script. We wish the writer well in all endeavors.